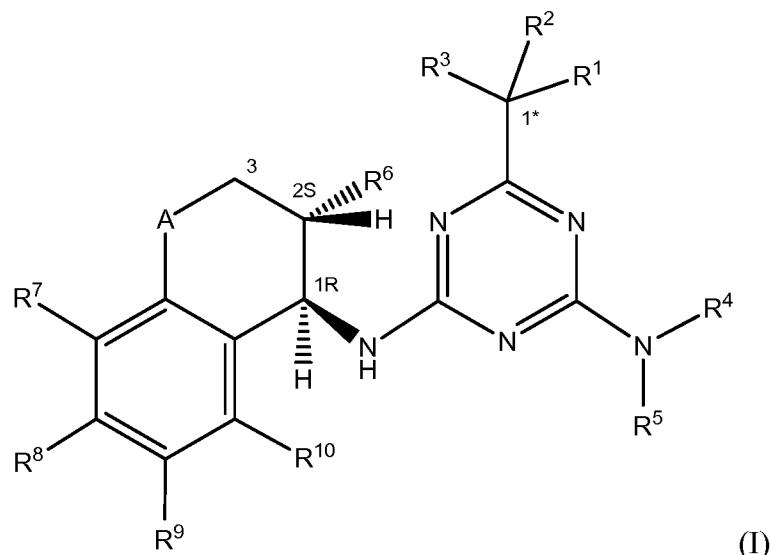
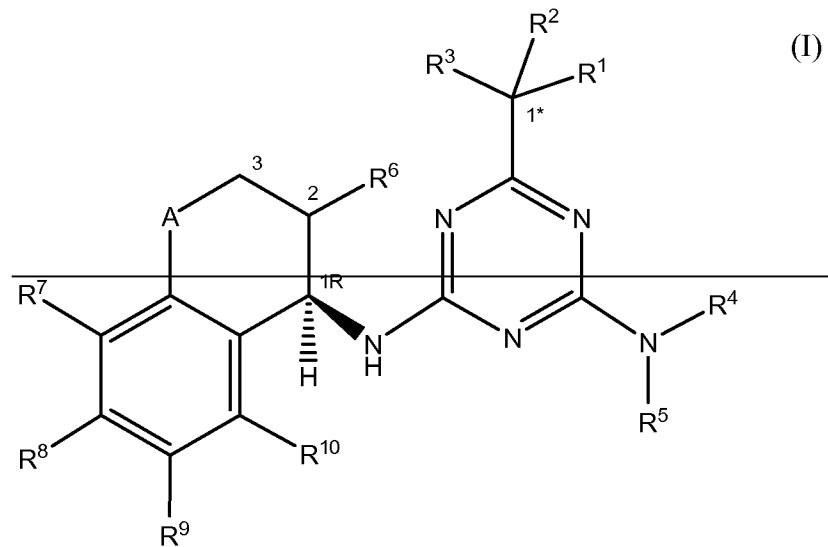


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows.

In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An optically active compound of formula (I),



in which:

R¹ is H, halogen, (C₁-C₆)alkyl, (C₁-C₆)haloalkyl, [(C₁-C₄)alkoxy](C₁-C₆)alkyl, (C₃-C₆)cycloalkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or more radicals selected from the group consisting of halogen, (C₁-C₄)alkyl and (C₁-C₄)haloalkyl, or is (C₂-C₆)alkenyl, (C₂-C₆)alkynyl, (C₂-C₆)haloalkenyl, (C₄-C₆)cycloalkenyl, (C₄-C₆)halocycloalkenyl, (C₁-C₆)alkoxy or (C₁-C₆)haloalkoxy;

R² is H, halogen, (C₁-C₆)alkyl or (C₁-C₄)alkoxy; or

R¹ and R² can together with the attached carbon atom form a (C₃-C₆)cycloalkyl or (C₄-C₆)cycloalkenyl ring;

R³ is H, (C₁-C₆)alkyl, (C₁-C₄)alkoxy or halogen;

R⁴ and R⁵ are each independently H, (C₁-C₄)alkyl, (C₁-C₄)haloalkyl, (C₃-C₄)alkenyl, (C₃-C₄)haloalkenyl, (C₃-C₄)alkynyl, (C₃-C₄)haloalkynyl or an acyl radical;

R⁶ is H, (C₁-C₆)alkyl or (C₁-C₆)alkoxy;

R⁷, R⁸, R⁹ and R¹⁰ are each independently H, (C₁-C₄)alkyl, (C₁-C₃)haloalkyl, halogen, (C₁-C₃)alkoxy, (C₁-C₃)haloalkoxy or CN;

A is CH₂, O or a direct bond; and

the stereochemical configuration at the marked 1R position is (R) having a stereochemical purity of from 60 to 100% (R),

the stereochemical configuration at the marked 2S position is (S) having a stereochemical purity of from 60 to 100% (S),

provided that R¹, R² and R³ are structurally different or provided that at least two of R¹, R² and R³ are structurally identical,

or

an agriculturally acceptable salt thereof.

2. (Currently amended) A compound or an agriculturally acceptable salt thereof as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

R¹ is H, halogen, (C₁-C₄)alkyl, such as methyl, ethyl, n-propyl or iso-propyl, or is (C₁-C₄)haloalkyl, [(C₁-C₄)alkoxy](C₁-C₄)alkyl, (C₃-C₆)cycloalkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by one or two (C₁-C₄)alkyl groups, or is (C₃-C₄)halocycloalkyl, (C₂-C₄)alkenyl, (C₂-C₄)haloalkenyl, (C₂-C₄)alkynyl, (C₁-C₄)alkoxy or (C₁-C₄)haloalkoxy;

R² is H or (C₁-C₄)alkyl; or

R¹ and R² together with the attached carbon atom form a (C₃-C₆)cycloalkyl ring;

R³ is H, (C₁-C₄)alkyl, (C₁-C₂)alkoxy or halogen;

R⁴ is H, (C₁-C₄)alkyl, (C₁-C₄)haloalkyl, (C₃-C₄)alkenyl, (C₃-C₄)alkynyl or an acyl radical having 1 to 12 carbon atoms;

R⁵ is H, (C₁-C₄)alkyl or (C₁-C₄)haloalkyl;

R⁶ is H, (C₁-C₃)alkyl or (C₁-C₃)alkoxy;

R⁷, R⁸, R⁹ and R¹⁰ are each independently H, (C₁-C₃)alkyl, halogen or (C₁-C₃)alkoxy; and

A is CH₂, O or a direct bond.

3. (Currently amended) A compound or an agriculturally acceptable salt thereof as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

R¹ is H or (C₁-C₃)alkyl;

R² is H or (C₁-C₃)alkyl; or

R¹ and R² together with the attached carbon atom form a (C₃-C₄)cycloalkyl ring;

R³ is H, (C₁-C₂)alkyl, methoxy, Cl or F;

R⁴ is H, (C₁-C₃)alkyl, (C₁-C₃)haloalkyl, allyl, propargyl, CHO, --CO(C₁-C₃)alkyl or -CO(C₁-C₃)haloalkyl;

R⁵ is H or (C₁-C₂)alkyl;

R⁶ is H, (C₁-C₃)alkyl or (C₄-C₃)alkoxy;

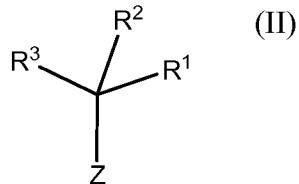
R⁷, R⁸, R⁹ and R¹⁰ are each independently H, methyl, F and Cl; and

A is CH₂, O or a direct bond.

Claim 4 (Currently amended)

4. A process for the preparation of a compound of the formula (I) or an agriculturally acceptable salt thereof as defined in claim 1, which process comprises:

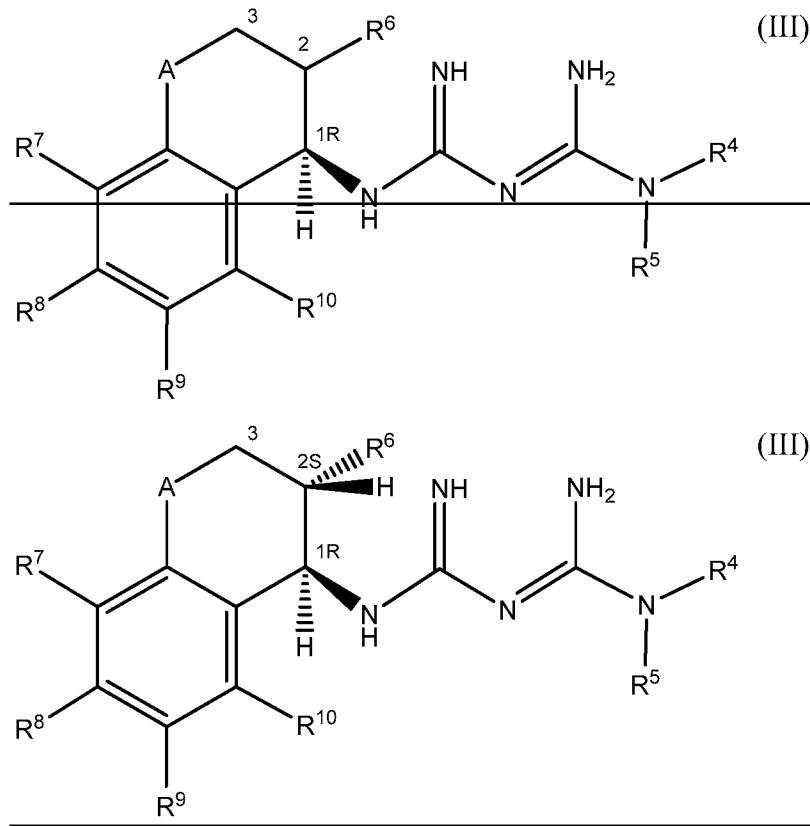
a) reacting a compound of formula (II):



wherein

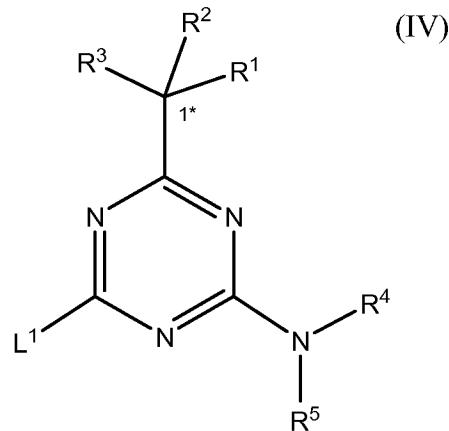
R¹, R² and R³ are as defined in formula (I), and

Z is a functional group selected from the group consisting of carboxylic ester, carboxylic orthoester, carboxylic acid chloride, carboxamide, cyano, carboxylic anhydride or trichloromethyl, with a biguanidine compound of formula (III) or an acid addition salt thereof:



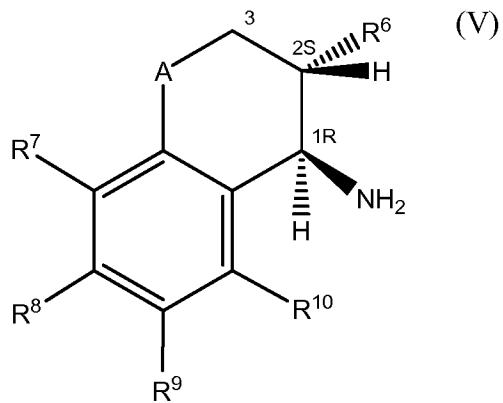
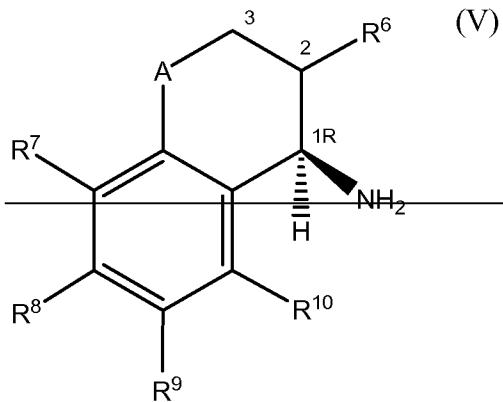
wherein R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , R^9 , R^{10} and A and the configuration at the marked 1S and 2 positions are as defined in formula (I); or

b) reacting a compound of formula (IV):



wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 and R^5 and the configuration at the marked 1^* position are as defined in formula (I), and

L¹ is a leaving group, with an amine of formula (V) or an acid addition salt thereof:



wherein R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰ and A and the configuration at the marked 1S and 2 positions position are as defined in formula (I); or

c) where one of R⁴ or R⁵ in formula (I) is (C₁-C₄)alkyl, (C₁-C₄)haloalkyl, (C₃-C₄)alkenyl, (C₃-C₄)haloalkenyl, (C₃-C₄)alkynyl or (C₃-C₄)haloalkynyl, reacting the corresponding compound of formula (I) wherein said R⁴ or R⁵ respectively is H, and the other radicals and the configurations are as defined in formula (I), with an alkylating agent of formula (VI) or (VII) respectively: R⁴-L² (VI) R⁵-L² (VI) wherein R⁴ or R⁵ is (C₁-C₄)alkyl, (C₁-C₄)haloalkyl, (C₃-C₄)alkenyl, (C₃-C₄)haloalkenyl, (C₃-C₄)alkynyl or (C₃-C₄)haloalkynyl and L² is a leaving group; or

d) where one of R⁴ or R⁵ is an acyl radical in formula (I), reacting the corresponding compound of formula (I) wherein said R⁴ or R⁵ respectively is H, and the other radicals and the configurations are as defined in formula (I), with an acylating agent of formula (VIII) or (IX) respectively: R⁴-L³ (VIII) R⁵-L³ (IX) wherein R⁴ and R⁵ are each an acyl radical as defined in formula (I) and L³ is a leaving group; or

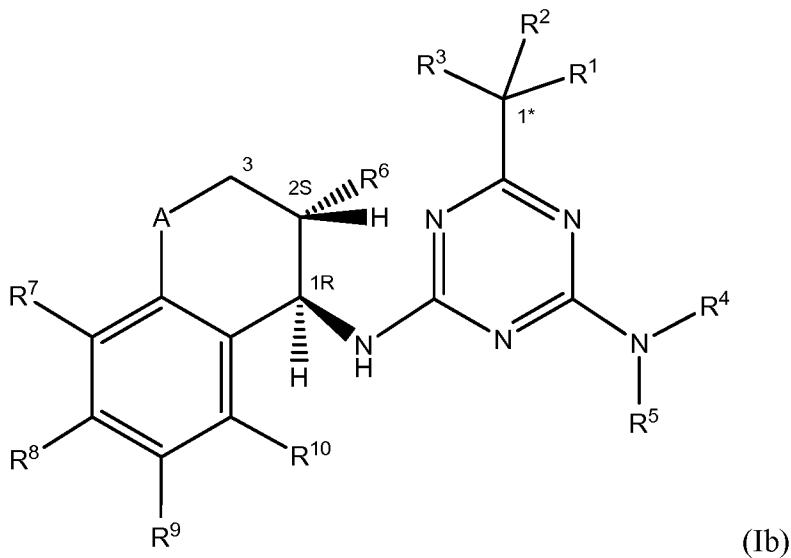
e) resolving a compound of formula (I) by using in the above-described processes one or more intermediates (II), (III), (IV) or (V) whose configuration differs from the configuration as defined in the compound of formula (I) to be prepared, and resolving the mixture obtained according to known methods of resolution.

5. (Previously presented) A herbicidal or plant growth regulating composition, which comprises one or more compounds of the formula (I) or their agriculturally acceptable salts as claimed in claim 1 and formulation auxiliaries applicable in crop protection.

6. (Previously presented) A method of controlling harmful plants or for regulating the growth of plants, which comprises applying an active amount of one or more compounds of the formula (I) or their agriculturally acceptable salts as claimed in claim 1 to the plants, plant seeds or the area under cultivation.

Claims 7-20 (cancelled)

21. (New) A compound or a salt thereof as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that it is a compound of the formula (Ib) or a salt thereof,



wherein:

R¹ is H, (C₁-C₆)alkyl or (C₁-C₆)alkoxy;

R² is H or (C₁-C₄)alkyl; or

R¹ and R² can together with the attached carbon atom form a (C₃-C₆)cycloalkyl ring;

R³ is H, (C₁-C₄)alkyl or halogen;

R⁴ and R⁵ are each H;

R⁶ is (C₁-C₆)alkyl;

R⁷, R⁸, R⁹ and R¹⁰ are each independently H, (C₁-C₆)alkyl or halogen; and

A is CH₂, O or a direct bond,

provided that the stereochemical configurations at positions 1R and 2S are defined as in formula (I) and provided that at least two of R¹, R² and R³ are structurally identical.

22. (New) A compound or a salt thereof as claimed in claim 21, characterized in that

R¹ is H, methyl or ethyl;

R² is H;

R³ is H, F, Cl, methyl or ethyl;

R⁴ and R⁵ are each H;

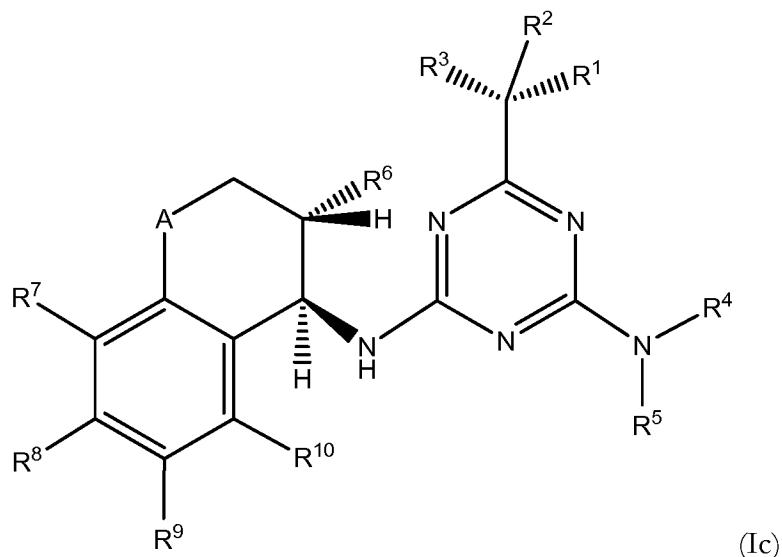
R⁶ is (C₁-C₄)alkyl;

R⁷, R⁸, R⁹ and R¹⁰ are each independently selected from the group consisting of H, methyl, Br, Cl or F; and

A is CH₂, O or a direct bond,

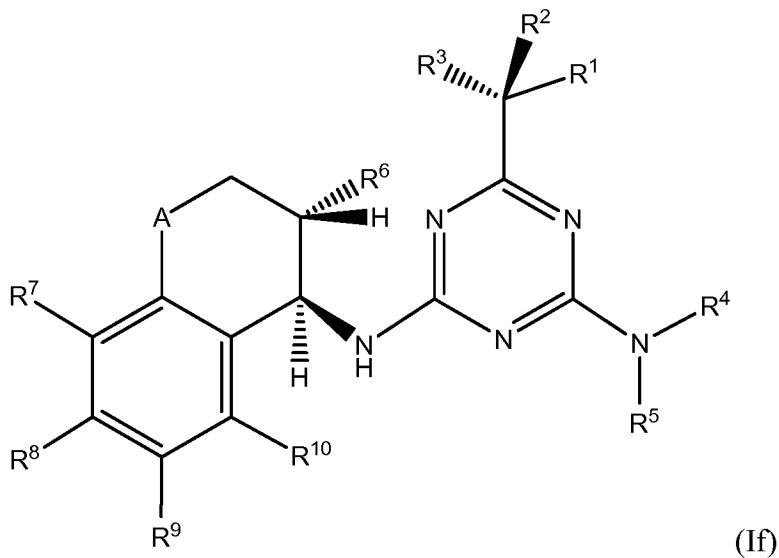
provided that at least two of R¹, R² and R³ are structurally identical.

23. (New) A compound or a salt thereof as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that it is a compound of the formula (Ic) or a salt thereof,



wherein R¹ to R¹⁰ and A and the stereochemical configurations at positions 1 and 2 are defined as in formula (I) and provided that R¹, R² and R³, are structurally different.

24. (New) A compound or a salt thereof as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that it is a compound of the formula (If) or a salt thereof,



wherein:

R¹ is (C₁-C₆)alkyl, (C₁-C₆)haloalkyl or (C₃-C₆)cycloalkyl;

R² is H;

R³ is (C₁-C₄)alkyl or halogen;

R⁶ is (C₁-C₆)alkyl; and

R⁴, R⁵, R⁷ to R¹⁰ and A and the stereochemical configurations at positions 1 and 2 are defined as in formula (Ic),

provided that R¹, R² and R³ are structurally different and

and the stereochemical configuration at the marked 1* position is having a stereochemical purity of from 60 to 100 %.

25. (New) A compound or a salt thereof as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that

R¹ is methyl or ethyl;

R² is H;

R³ is methyl, ethyl, F or Cl;

R⁴ and R⁵ are each H;

R⁶ is methyl or ethyl; and

R⁷, R⁸, R⁹ and R¹⁰ are each independently H, methyl, Br, Cl or F,

provided that R¹, R² and R³ are structurally different.

26. (New) A compound or a salt thereof as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the stereochemical configuration at the marked 1 position is (R) having a stereochemical purity of from 80 to 100 % (R),

and the stereochemical configuration at the marked 2 position is (S) having a stereochemical purity of from 80 to 100 % (S).

27. (New) A compound or a salt thereof as claimed in claim 25, characterized in that the stereochemical configuration at the marked 1 position is (R) having a stereochemical purity of from 80 to 100 % (R),

and the stereochemical configuration at the marked 2 position is (S) having a stereochemical purity of from 80 to 100 % (S).